

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for applying a suture to a wound, comprising:

- a) a central shaft having a proximal end and a distal end;
- b) an obturator coupled to the distal end of said shaft;
- c) a pair of hollow needles slidably coupled to said central shaft, each of said needles having a sharp end and being movable from a first position where said sharp ends are distant from said obturator to a second position where said sharp ends are close to said obturator;
- d) a suture control mechanism coupled to one of said needles for delivering suture material through the sharp end of the needle; and
- e) a snare control mechanism coupled to the other of said needles for delivering a snare through the sharp end of the needle;
- f) a skin pressure plate mounted on said shaft and movable relative to said obturator;
- g) a needle mounting plate mounted to said central shaft; and
- h) said skin pressure plate having a threaded split collar coaxially disposed on said central shaft and a rotatable locking nut, wherein said rotatable locking nut is threadably received on said split collar of said skin pressure plate and, upon tightening, locks said skin pressure plate to said central shaft.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

said obturator has a bulbous distal end and a pair of fascia stretching fins.

5. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:

said fascia stretching fins taper proximally.

6. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:

said fascia stretching fins terminate in a fascia supporting shelf.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein:

said skin pressure plate has a pair of skin stretching fins.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein:

said fins taper distally.

9. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein:

the sharp ends of said needles pass through said fins.

10 - 22. (Cancelled)